A HOW-TO GUIDE



### Navigating the Interview Process from Both Sides of the Desk



Cathy Wynne, SPHR, SHRM-CP wynnehires.com NAVIGATING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE DESK

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#### MEET CATHY WYNNE, CEO OF WYNNE HIRES

### Hi, I'm Your Coach, Cathy Wynne

I have worked in talent acquisition for 30 years with corporate and franchised staffing & recruiting organizations. As the CEO of Wynne Hires, I create and inspire authentic conversations to align talent, purpose, and goals for employment and business success. I have supported small businesses and large global organizations in industries like non-profit, manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, and more.

We engage in contingency searches for HR, Accounting, Finance, Engineering, Sales, and Senior Leadership roles.

An energetic, inquisitive, process-driven natural leader, I work with businesses to identify their specific talent needs and strategize an approach to marketing their brand, culture, and employer value proposition to achieve results in attracting and hiring the right employees.





Outside of work, I am an outdoor enthusiast who enjoys hiking, gardening, bicycling, pickleball, billiards, yoga, and water sports, as well as a musician who loves singing and playing music with family and friends. As a breast cancer survivor, I use my voice to advocate for awareness and authentic conversations in the workplace.

- Cathy Wynne

#### INTRODUCTION

### Bridging the Interview Gap

#### **Understanding Both Sides of the Desk**

Welcome to Navigating the Interview Process from Both Sides of the Desk! This e-book is your friendly and comprehensive guide to understanding the ins and outs of the hiring process, ensuring that both employers and job seekers have a positive and fruitful experience. Our goal is to provide you with valuable insights and tips that will help you navigate the job market with confidence, whether you're looking to hire the perfect candidate or land your dream job.

In today's competitive job market, it's crucial for both employers and job seekers to be well-prepared and informed about the hiring process. As an employer, you want to attract top talent and ensure that the candidates you hire will be a great fit for your organization. On the other hand, as a job seeker, you want to stand out from the competition and find a role that aligns with your skills, values, and career goals.

We will cover various aspects of the hiring process, such as crafting an impressive resume and cover letter, preparing for interviews, understanding the nuances of the hiring process, evaluating fit, and starting a new job. Each section will provide practical advice and tips tailored for both employers and job seekers, allowing you to gain a wellrounded perspective on the interview process from both sides of the desk.

We understand that the hiring process can be intimidating and even overwhelming at times, but don't worry – we're here to help! By the end of this e-book, you'll be equipped with the knowledge and tools you need to successfully navigate the interview process and achieve your goals, whether you're an employer looking to build a winning team or a job seeker ready to take the next step in your career.

So, let's dive in and explore the world of interviews together!



CHAPTER I

## Building Your Reputation for Success

In today's competitive job market, both candidates and employers need to be aware and intentional about their branding. A strong personal or employer brand can make a significant impact on your career or organization's success.

#### For Job Seekers:

A staggering 90% of employers research candidates online before deciding to contact them. So, what does a quick online search of your name reveal about you? Go ahead and Google your name to see what comes up.

Your personal brand is how others perceive you. It's your reputation, and it's shaped by your activity, posts, comments, shares, and likes on various media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and TikTok.

#### **Tips for Improving Your Personal Brand**

Create a content calendar: Plan your social media posts to share relevant and engaging content that supports your personal brand.

Engage with thought leaders: Follow and interact with influencers in your field to gain insights, stay current on industry trends, and increase your visibility.

Optimize your LinkedIn profile: Make sure your LinkedIn profile is complete, up-todate, and keyword-optimized to increase your chances of being found by recruiters and potential employers.

#### For Employers:

Employer branding is all about reputation. In the age of social media, word travels fast, and perception matters. Modern job seekers heavily weigh a prospective employer's reputation in their decision to apply for a job or accept an offer. Candidates want to feel good about the company they're considering joining. Employers should research, assess, strategize, plan, and influence their branding.

#### **Define Your Employer Value Proposition**

Your employer value proposition (EVP) is the core of your employer brand and reputation. It's the unique promise you make to your employees and candidates, setting you apart from other employers. Your EVP should align with your organizational goals, vision, and mission and communicate what you offer and expect in terms of rewards, opportunities, and experiences. To define your EVP, understand your target audience, strengths and weaknesses, and market position.

#### Top Searches Used by Candidates to Research Employers

- Employer Website: Company history, products & services, career page, blog, news items, leadership profiles, company initiatives, and culture.
- <u>Google Reviews</u>
- Glassdoor
- Indeed
- LinkedIn
- D&B Hoovers
- <u>Comparably</u>
- <u>Superpages</u>



#### CHAPTER II

### Resume and Cover Letter Essentials

#### **Crafting a Compelling Resume**

A compelling resume is key to showcasing your skills and experience in a clear and concise manner. Here are some essential tips for creating a resume that stands out:

- Choose the right format: Select a resume format that best highlights your strengths, whether it's chronological, functional, or a combination of both.
- Tailor your resume: Customize your resume for each job application, emphasizing the skills and experience most relevant to the position.
- Use strong action verbs: Start each bullet point with powerful action verbs (e.g., "managed," "developed," "achieved") to demonstrate your accomplishments.
- Quantify your achievements: Whenever possible, include specific numbers and metrics to illustrate the impact of your work (e.g., "increased sales by 20%").
- Keep it concise: Aim for a one to twopage resume, focusing on your most relevant and recent experiences.
- Proofread: Thoroughly proofread your resume for spelling, grammar, and formatting errors to ensure a polished and professional appearance.

#### Writing an Engaging Cover Letter

A well-crafted cover letter allows you to showcase your personality, enthusiasm, and unique qualifications for the position. Here are some key tips for writing an engaging cover letter:

- Address the hiring manager: Whenever possible, address your cover letter to the specific hiring manager or recruiter by name.
- Open with a strong introduction: Start your cover letter with a captivating opening paragraph that grabs the reader's attention and highlights your interest in the position.
- Demonstrate your fit: Use the body of the cover letter to explain how your skills, experience, and accomplishments align with the job requirements and company culture.
- Tell a story: Share a relevant anecdote or example that showcases your problem-solving abilities, teamwork, or other valuable qualities.
- Close with a call to action: End your cover letter with a confident closing paragraph encouraging the employer to contact you for an interview.
- Proofread: Like your resume, proofread your cover letter for spelling, grammar, and formatting errors to ensure a polished and professional presentation.



#### A Resume is a Conversation Starter

A resume provides essential information to the reader about:

- WHO you are
- WHAT you are looking for
- WHERE you live and have worked
- WHEN your experience is from
- HOW to contact you

#### Hot Tip for Success

Update your cell phone voicemail message to reflect your professional image. A voicemail like this can help you stand out:

"Hi, this is Cathy Wynne's personal cell phone. Sorry, I missed your call. Please text me for the fastest response or leave a message here, and I'll return your call ASAP."

#### Format, Font & Functional Keywords

Keep it simple! Fancy resume templates might look appealing, but they can cause issues with HR Applicant Tracking Software (ATS). To make your resume AI-friendly:

- Use a chronological resume format
- Choose a 10-point font for readability
- Include functional keywords related to your experience, such as job title, industry, software skills, job function, competencies, job responsibilities, knowledge, and expertise
- Quantify your achievements by utilizing the S.A.M. (Saved, Achieved, Made) method to showcase the impact of your work (e.g., "increased sales by 20%").
- To catch spelling, grammar, and tense errors, read your resume out loud.
- Current jobs should be in the present tense, while past jobs should be written in the past tense.

CHAPTER III

### Preparing for the Interview

For Employers:

Candidates interested in your opportunity are also engaged with other employers, so it's essential to showcase your value proposition and demonstrate your ability to move swiftly, or you risk losing out on top talent.

#### **Strategize the Hiring Process**

- Identify stakeholders: Determine which team members will be involved in the interview process and ensure they are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Agree on a timeline: Establish a hiring timeline that outlines the expected duration for each stage of the process, from initial screening to final interviews and onboarding.
- Define candidate requirements: Clearly outline the desired and required qualifications, skills, and attributes for the role.
- Plan the interview steps: Decide on the interview stages, such as phone screenings, in-person interviews, and panel interviews, and determine the sequence in which they will occur.
- Incorporate assessments: If applicable, decide on the types of assessments to be used and when they will be administered during the hiring process.
- Coordinate availability: Ensure that all stakeholders have a calendar strategy in place to schedule interviews promptly and move the process along.
- Outline training and onboarding: Develop a plan for the successful integration of new hires into your organization, including training and onboarding processes.









#### **Making a Great First Impression**

First impressions are crucial in the interview process, as they set the tone for the entire interaction. In this section, we'll share some helpful tips for both parties on how to make a memorable first impression.

For Employers:

- Create a welcoming environment: Ensure that the interview space is clean, well-lit, and comfortable. Offer refreshments and make sure the candidate feels at ease.
- Be punctual: Arrive on time and be prepared for the interview. This shows respect for the candidate's time and sets a professional tone.
- Introduce yourself and your team: Provide a brief introduction of yourself and any other team members present, outlining your roles within the company.
- Show genuine interest: Listen actively and engage with the candidate's responses, demonstrating that you value their input and are genuinely interested in learning more about them.
- Maintain open communication: Ensure clear, open communication at all stages of the interview; provide a daily itinerary, clarify the next steps, and remain accessible for queries.
- Adopt a balanced approach: Balance professionalism with personability during interviews; treat interviews seriously while exhibiting warmth, as candidates are evaluating you too.











#### Making a Great First Impression

For Job Seekers:

- Research the company: Before the interview, take the time to research the company, its values, mission, and recent news. This will help you tailor your responses and show genuine interest in the organization.
- Arrive early: Plan to arrive at least 10– 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. This demonstrates punctuality and allows you to settle in before the interview begins.
- Bring necessary documents: Have extra copies of your resume, cover letter, and other relevant documents.
- Offer a firm handshake: Greet the interviewer with a confident, firm handshake while making eye contact.
- Express gratitude: Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to meet with them and express your enthusiasm for the position and company.
- Prepare for common interview questions: Practice answering questions like "Why do you want to work for us?" It will help you feel more confident during the interview.



#### **Bring Essential Items**

- Bring two pens to the interview, as it's possible that one might run out of ink. Having a backup pen ensures you can take notes or fill out any necessary paperwork without any issues.
- Bring a notepad to jot down important information, questions, or key points you'd like to remember or discuss during the interview.
- Bring several copies of your resume to provide to the interviewer or any other team members you meet with during the process.
- Have a printed list of your references, including their names, job titles, contact information, and your relationship to them.

#### **Proper Phone Etiquette**

- Ensure your phone is on silent mode or turned off during the interview to avoid any disruptions or distractions.
- In case you're asked to schedule a follow-up interview or provide reference contact information, have your phone available to access your calendar or contact list. However, only use your phone for these purposes and avoid checking messages or social media during the interview.
- If you need to use your phone during the interview, politely inform the interviewer and explain the reason for doing so. This demonstrates respect and professionalism.

#### **Presenting Your Best Self**

For Employers and Job Seekers:

Whether you're on the hiring side or the job-seeking side, your appearance plays a crucial role in making a positive first impression.

- Check your look in the mirror: Before any interview or meeting, take a moment to examine your appearance. Ensure your shoes are polished, your clothes are free of pet hair and properly pressed, and your overall look is neat and tidy.
- Keep it simple: Opt for a more conservative look when it comes to jewelry, accessories, and fragrances. Save the flashy jewelry, strong cologne or perfume, and bold fashion statements for social settings.
- Dress appropriately: Research the company's dress code and culture, and choose an outfit that aligns with their expectations. When in doubt, it's always better to err on the side of dressing more formally.

#### Combating Appearance Discrimination: The CROWN Act

Appearance discrimination is a significant issue that can impact both job seekers and employers. One notable example is hair discrimination, which disproportionately affects Black individuals. To address this issue, the CROWN (Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act has been introduced in several states and municipalities across the United States. The CROWN Act is a piece of legislation that aims to protect individuals from discrimination based on their natural hair or hairstyles. Specifically, the Act:

- Prohibits discrimination based on hair texture or protective hairstyles, such as braids, locs, twists, or Afros.
- Expands the definition of race in anti-discrimination laws to include hair texture and hairstyles.
- Encourages employers and educational institutions to create inclusive environments that respect and celebrate diversity.
- As an employer or job seeker, it's essential to be aware of the CROWN Act and promote a culture of inclusivity and respect to foster a more diverse and welcoming environment for all individuals, regardless of their appearance.

First impressions matter for both employers and job seekers. By presenting yourself professionally, being mindful of your appearance, and actively combating appearance discrimination, you'll create a positive and inclusive environment that benefits everyone involved.



CHAPTER IV

### Understanding the Hiring Process



#### **Communicating the Hiring Process**

Clear communication is the foundation of a successful hiring process. Employers can set realistic expectations and ensure a smooth experience by providing transparent information about the steps involved. This may include sharing details about the timeline, interview format, and required assessments or background checks.



#### **Creating a Positive Experience**

A positive interview experience benefits everyone involved. Employers should create a comfortable environment for candidates, offering clear directions to the interview location and providing a warm welcome upon arrival. Interviewers should be well-prepared, asking thoughtful questions that allow candidates to showcase their skills and experience. Respecting candidates' time by starting and ending interviews as scheduled and minimizing unnecessary waiting periods is vital.



#### Following Up After the Interview

Employers should aim to provide updates on the hiring process within a reasonable time frame, whether extending an offer, requesting additional information, or informing the candidate that they have not been selected. This demonstrates professionalism and helps maintain a positive reputation for the company. For job seekers, following up with a thank-you email or note can help express gratitude for the opportunity and reinforce their interest in the position.

#### **Evaluating Fit**

Ensuring a candidate's career path aligns with the role is essential for long-term success and job satisfaction. Employers should delve into a candidate's work history, skills, and accomplishments to gain insights into their career trajectory and determine if the position aligns with their goals and expertise. Job seekers should be prepared to articulate their career aspirations and explain how the opportunity aligns with their long-term objectives while demonstrating their ability to contribute meaningfully to the organization.

#### **Cultural Fit**

Cultural fit is a significant factor in the hiring process, impacting employee engagement and overall team cohesion. Employers should consider how a candidate's values, communication style and work habits align with the company's culture during the interview process, using behavioral interview questions and situational examples to gauge compatibility. Job seekers can showcase their cultural fit by researching the company's values and mission, sharing examples of how they have embodied these principles in their previous roles, and expressing enthusiasm for the company's culture.

#### **Continuous Growth Opportunities**

Fostering continuous growth opportunities is essential for employee satisfaction, retention and promoting a culture of excellence. Employers can attract and retain top talent by offering opportunities for skill development, mentorship, and advancement while ensuring employees remain engaged and motivated. Job seekers should inquire about professional development opportunities during the interview process and express their enthusiasm for continuous learning and growth, positioning themselves as proactive and ambitious individuals who will contribute to the organization's success.

#### **Crafting an Exceptional Candidate Experience**

Crafting a seamless and enjoyable candidate experience is crucial for attracting top talent. To achieve this, ensure your hiring process is well-defined, efficient, and reflective of your company culture. When inviting a candidate for an interview, provide essential details such as the interview format (in-person, phone, or video), the attendees (including names and titles for one-on-one or panel interviews), the anticipated duration of the interview, an overview of the steps from screening to offer, and the method and timeline for providing feedback.

#### A Transparent and Confident Process

Establishing clear hiring expectations from the outset is advantageous for both employers and candidates. This includes outlining any pre-employment screenings, such as background checks, driving records, credit checks, and drug screenings, as well as discussing any legal agreements, such as non-compete clauses, non-disclosure agreements, and confidentiality agreements. By setting these expectations early on, both parties can proceed with transparency and confidence throughout the hiring process.

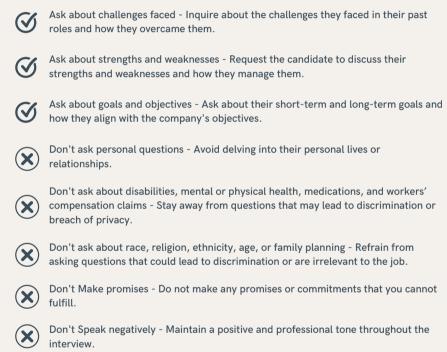
#### CHAPTER V

### Interview Q&A

they contributed to their growth.

#### Do's and Don'ts

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Ask about past experience - Ask about their previous work experiences and how







#### CHAPTER V CONTINUED

#### **Common Questions to Ask and Answer**

- Describe your experience in \_\_\_\_
- What is your most recent exposure to\_\_\_
- Explain your strengths in \_\_\_\_
- What would you like to gain skills in/what would you like to improve?
- Tell me about a time when you did \_\_\_\_
- Illustrate for me the last time you had \_\_\_\_
- Define for me your expertise in \_\_\_\_
- What is your motivation for considering a new job?
- How would you describe your work style?
- What work atmosphere do you thrive in? (fast, systematic, organized, laid-back, fun)
- Describe a work mistake you made and the outcome?
- Describe your last work performance review.
- How do you handle conflict resolution in the workplace?
- Can you provide an example of a time when you had to prioritize multiple tasks? How did you manage them?
- Describe a situation where you had to work under pressure. How did you handle it?
- What is your approach to problem-solving and decision-making?
- How do you stay organized and manage your time effectively?
- Can you give an example of a time when you had to adapt to a significant change in your work environment?
- Describe a situation where you had to collaborate with a difficult team member. How did you handle it?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- · How do you stay up-to-date with industry trends and developments?
- Describe a project or accomplishment that you consider to be the most significant in your career.
- How do you handle receiving constructive criticism?
- Can you provide an example of a time when you demonstrated leadership skills?
- What strategies do you use to maintain a healthy work-life balance?
- How do you approach learning new skills or technologies?
- Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision at work. What factors did you consider, and what was the outcome?

Additional resources:

- Indeed's Interview Q&A
- <u>The Muse Interview Q&A</u>
- Glassdoor's Interview Q&A



#### CHAPTER VI

### Offers, Exits & Counteroffers

Job offers should be in writing and include the following features:

	Description
Job Title	The position's name within the company
Employment Classification	Full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract
Job Description	Summary of role's tasks and responsibilities
Salary & Pay Frequency	Compensation amount and payment schedule
Perks & Benefits	Additional incentives beyond salary
Work Schedule & Location	Hours and workplace setting
Management Structure	Reporting hierarchy and supervisors
Start/End Date	Employment duration and end date (if contract/temporary)
Hiring Conditions	Requirements for employment eligibility
Employment Agreements	Contracts outlining job terms
Contact Details	Information for communication and queries
How/When to Respond	Guidelines and timeline to respond to the offer
Relevant Documents	Necessary paperwork for application

#### **Resigning Doesn't Need to be Hard**

Giving two weeks' notice is standard practice when resigning, unless there are circumstances where you can't stay for the duration. It is important to clean up your computer and other workplace devices before giving notice, ensuring that all your personal data is removed. It's important to write a formal resignation letter that states the last day you'll be working, even if you choose to resign via email or phone.



#### Maintain Professionalism and Positivity

No matter how much you dislike your job, your boss, or the company, refrain from expressing it in writing. When quitting, it's crucial to be mindful of your words. Resist the temptation to share your frustrations about your manager, team, or work environment. Your resignation letter will be placed in your employment file, and it can come back to haunt you—even years after you've resigned. Venting is not worth it. Instead, emphasize the positive aspects and how the company has benefited you, even though it's time to move on. There's no need for negativity—you're leaving, and you want to leave on good terms.



#### Be Respectful and Humble

Even if you've landed the best job in the world, avoid bragging about it. There's no point in making your soon-tobe former colleagues feel bad about your departure. They'll miss you, and you have a great new job, so there's no need to boast. The best practice when discussing your resignation is to be brief, respectful, and move on.



#### **Farewell and Future Connections**

Before leaving, take the time to send a farewell message to your co-workers, letting them know that you're moving on to a new position, starting a job search, retiring, or embarking on a different life path. Maintaining positive relationships with former colleagues can benefit you in the future, so ensure that you leave on good terms and stay connected.

#### **Counter Offers Don't Work**

At first glance, a counteroffer may appear to be a win-win situation: the company retains a valuable employee, and the employee receives a raise or other overdue benefits without taking the risk of moving to a new company. However, the reality is that counteroffers only provide a short-term solution for an employee considering leaving.

Many recruiting websites claim nine out of 10 candidates who accept a counteroffer leave within a year anyway. The underlying issue is that a threat of departure damages trust on both sides and rebuilding that trust is challenging. A Harvard Business Review survey found that 80 percent of senior executives believe trust is diminished when an employee accepts a counteroffer.

There are numerous reasons why people seek to change jobs. Money is a factor, but employees often pursue more fulfilling positions, new industries, shorter commutes, remote work opportunities, better leadership, or more promising career development paths. Over time, a candidate may realize that a slight increase in salary doesn't compensate for the sacrifices made by staying put.

Companies that consistently offer higher pay just as an employee is about to leave essentially admit that they were underpaying their employees, reflecting poor leadership. The urge to make or accept a counteroffer is understandable. When a valuable employee is on the verge of leaving, it's natural to want to do whatever it takes to keep them. However, this is merely a temporary solution. A more effective approach is to address underlying issues before they become unfixable and, when necessary, respectfully part ways with departing employees. This allows the company to replace them with individuals who are confident they want the job.



CHAPTER VII

### Starting that New Job

#### **Creating a Successful Relationship**

In this chapter, we'll provide guidance for both employers and employees on how to ensure a smooth transition into a new role. We'll cover tips for onboarding and setting expectations to set everyone up for success. Onboarding is a crucial process for employers, as it sets the tone for the experience emplovee's within the company. A well-structured onboarding process can lead to higher retention rates and overall employee satisfaction. Starting a new job can be both exciting and nervewracking. As an employee, it's important to be proactive during the onboarding process to ensure a smooth transition.

To create an effective onboarding plan, employers should prepare for the new hire's arrival, designate a mentor or buddy, develop a training plan, and schedule check-ins. Employees can make the most of onboarding by asking questions, taking notes, being open to feedback, and networking with colleagues. Clearly communicating expectations is essential for both the employer and employee to ensure a successful working relationship. Employers must define job responsibilities, establish performance metrics, and provide regular feedback. Employees can succeed in their new role by clarifying expectations, setting personal goals, and communicating progress.



### **Onboarding Quick Facts**



#### **Company Handbook**

Job seekers: Review for policies and culture. Employers: Keep updated and clear.



#### **Resources for Employees**

Job seekers: Ask about employee resources. Employers: Offer a resource list for success.



Org Chart, Directory, Escalation

Job seekers: Learn company structure & leaders Employers: Maintain org chart, clear escalation points.



#### Standard of Communication

Job seekers: Adapt to company comms style. Employers: Set and promote clear communication.



#### In Case of Emergency

Job seekers: Know emergency procedures. Employers: Develop and share emergency plans.



#### Regular Feedback

Job seekers: Schedule meetings with supervisors. Employers: Regularly check-in, provide guidance.

Understand the onboarding plan and define training so everyone knows what to expect and has the necessary tools, resources, and knowledge to become effective and successful in their roles.

#### **Onboarding Checklist**

- Complete necessary paperwork and documentation.
- Provide an overview of company culture and values.
- Introduce new employees to their team and colleagues.
- Set up workstations and provide necessary equipment.
- Review job responsibilities and expectations.
- Conduct orientation and training sessions.
- Establish communication channels and points of contact.
- Schedule regular check-ins and feedback meetings.

CONCLUSION

# This is the beginning of something good.

We hope this e-book has been helpful for employers and job seekers to reflect on current practices and for continuous improvement in the hiring process. A well-executed interview process will save time, reduce anxiety, improve results, and improve the overall experience for everyone.

The key to a successful hiring process is constant improvement and adaptation. By staying open to new ideas and embracing change, you'll be able to refine your approach and achieve better results over time. Keep learning, stay curious, and don't be afraid to challenge conventional wisdom

As you embark on your hiring journey, we wish you the best of luck. May you find the right fit and build lasting, successful partnerships that contribute to your growth and success.

#### Meet with Wynne Hires Today!

